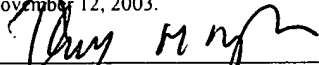


CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence (with all attachments) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: MAIL STOP Response Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on November 12, 2003.



Thomas H. Majcher, Reg. No. 31,119

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appl. No. : 09/632,741
Applicant : Brent Belding et al.
Filed : August 4, 2000
Art Unit : 3738
Examiner : Chattopadhyay, Urmi
Title : DETACHABLE SHEATH TO PROVIDE PRE-DEPLOYMENT
STENT SECURITY AND ENHANCED PRECISION

Docket No.: : ACS-53498 (2106P)
Customer No. : 24201

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

**DECLARATION OF PRIOR INVENTION IN THE
UNITED STATES TO OVERCOME CITED
PATENT OR PUBLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.131**

We, Brent Belding, Brian P. Cahill, Jeffrey T. Ellis, Richard J. Foust, Arkady Kokish, Florencia Lim, Chi Long, declare the following:

1. We are the co-inventors of the subject matter of the above-identified patent application.
2. We are informed that the Patent Office examiner has rejected the claims of the present application as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,432,130 to Hanson (the "Hanson patent"). We submit this declaration to help overcome these rejections.

3. We conceived of and completed our invention, disclosed by the present application, in the United States at a date prior to April 20, 2000, which is the filing date of the Hanson patent. We were diligent in reducing our invention to practice from at least the time of conception, to a time just prior to the filing date of the Hanson patent, up to the filing date of our application on August 4, 2000.

4. To establish an earlier date of conception through completion in the United States of our invention and our diligence, we submit the following document attached hereto as Exhibit A. Exhibit A contains 6 pages from an Invention Disclosure form. We disclosed features of our invention in this form, which form is then considered internally for a patent by our company. The form thus describes our invention during the above-mentioned period of time, and which invention is now claimed in the present application.

5. We declare that the attached Exhibit A is a true and accurate copy of the original document, except that the dates in Exhibit A have been redacted.

6. We hereby declare that all statements made herein of own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under § 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of inventor: BRENT BELDING

Inventor's signature: _____

Date: _____, 2003

Residence: Durham, North Carolina

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: 5544 Sunlight Dr. #307, Durham, NC 27707

Full name of second inventor: BRIAN P. CAHILL

Inventor's signature: _____

Date: _____, 2003

Residence: Elmhurst, Illinois

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: 220 N. Addison Ave.; Elmhurst, Illinois 60126

Full name of third inventor: JEFFREY T. ELLIS

Inventor's signature: Jeffrey T. Ellis

Date: 10/27, 2003

Residence: ~~Mountain View, California~~ San Francisco, CA

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: ~~1957 California Street, #14, Mountain View, California 94040~~
990 Duncan Street # 307-G San Francisco, CA 94131

Full name of fourth inventor: RICHARD J. FOUST

Inventor's signature: [Signature]

Date: 10/29, 2003

Residence: ~~Mountain View, California~~ San Francisco, CA

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: ~~2013 Saint Julien Court, Mountain View, California 94043~~
67 Mullen Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94110

Full name of fifth inventor: ARKADY KOKISH

Inventor's signature: [Signature]

Date: 10/30, 2003

Residence: Los Gatos, California

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: 105 Griffith Place, Los Gatos, California 95030

Full name of sixth inventor: FLORENCIA LIM

Inventor's signature: _____

Florencia Lim

Date: Oct 27, 2003

Residence: Union City, California

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: 2710 Cherry Blossom Way, Union City, California 94587

Full name of seventh inventor: CHI LONG

Inventor's signature: _____

Chi Long

Date: 10/27, 2003

Residence: San Jose, California

Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: 2856 Plumas Drive, San Jose, California 95121